United Nations CEDAW/C/SP/1998/4

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Tenth meeting
New York, 17 February 1998

Report of the States parties

1. The tenth meeting of the States parties was called to order on 17 February 1997 by Mr. André Giroux (Canada), the temporary Chairperson. Mr. Samir Moubarak (Lebanon) was elected Chairperson, and Mr. Carlston B. Boucher (Barbados), Mr. Janis Priedkalns (Latvia), Ms. Karin A. M. C. Wester (Netherlands) and Ms. Mwila Grace Banda Chigaga (Zambia) were elected Vice-Chairpersons. The provisional agenda contained in document CEDAW/SP/1998/1 was adopted.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General made a statement in which she informed the States parties that 161 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that it was second only to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the most widely ratified human rights treaty.

3. The representative of the Secretary-General indicated that, while the Convention remained subject to a large number of reservations, some of which were far-reaching, progress had also been achieved in that regard. She noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/68 of 12 December 1996, reiterated the call made by the Fourth World Conference on Women that States parties should limit the extent of any reservations they lodge to the Convention and ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law. She added that the Conference also urged States parties to review regularly their reservations with a view to withdrawing them.

4. She informed the meeting of States parties that the number of States that have accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, on the meeting time for the Committee was growing steadily but that only 19 instruments of acceptance have been received by the Secretary-General, out of the two thirds of the majority of States parties required.

5. The representative of the Secretary-General highlighted several issues raised by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth sessions. She noted that a total of 164 reports have not yet been received from the States parties and drew attention to the Committee's decision to invite States parties to combine a maximum of two reports required under article 18 of the Convention. She indicated that specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations were now invited to present information to the pre-session working group on States parties' periodic reports.

6. The representative of the Secretary-General indicated that, at its seventeenth session, the Committee had adopted general recommendation 23, on women in public life, which concerned articles 7 and 8 of the Convention. The Committee had also adopted a new three-stage process for the preparation of general recommendations and agreed that its next general recommendation would address article 12 of the Convention, on women and health.

7. In accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention, the States parties elected, by secret ballot, 12 members of the Committee on the Elimination of

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Discrimination against Women. Six current members were proposed for re-election. The experts re-elected were Charlotte Abaka (Ghana), Emna Aouij (Tunisia), Ivanka Corti (Italy) and Carmel Shalev (Israel). The new members elected were Feng Cui (China), Naela Gabr (Egypt), Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka), Rosalyn Hazelle (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Rosario Manalo (Philippines), Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini (South Africa), Zelmira M. E. Regazzoli (Argentina) and Chikako Taya (Japan). The list of all candidates and their curricula vitae is contained in a note by the Secretary-General (CEDAW/SP/1998/3 and Add.1).

8. In conformity with article 28 of the Convention, the meeting also had before it a document (CEDAW/SP/1998/2), which contained reservations of States parties and notifications of withdrawals, as well as objections to States parties' reservations.